

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FEN DRAYTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Fen Drayton, Cambridge

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110606

Acting Headteacher: Mrs Hilary Williams

Lead inspector: John Messer

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> July 2005

Inspection number: 266818

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 4-11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 52

School address: Cootes Lane  
Fen Drayton  
Cambridge  
Cambridgeshire  
Postcode: CB4 5SL

Telephone number: 01954 273346  
Fax number: 01954 273345

Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr Peter Durant

Date of previous inspection: 28 June 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This rural community primary school is much smaller than most primary schools. For most of the week pupils are organised into three classes. There is an almost equal number of boys and girls. Most pupils come from the village and the surrounding area, although a quarter come from further afield as a result of parental choice. Pupils come from mixed social backgrounds but the circumstances of most are broadly average. Nearly all pupils are from white British families. Children's attainment on entry to the school is broadly average but there is a very wide range of ability. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, around nine per cent, is below average. The proportion of pupils who are entered on the school's record of special educational needs, 18 per cent, is broadly average but the proportion who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs because they need considerable help with their learning is well above average. Overall, the proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school partway through this phase of their education, around 24 per cent, is above average. In 2003 the school received a School Achievement Award in recognition of its improved performance in the national tests for pupils in Year 6.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15477	John Messer	Lead inspector	English, information and communication technology, art and design, geography.
9981	Saleem Hussain	Lay inspector	
20003	Susan Metcalfe	Team inspector	Foundation stage, mathematics, science, religious education, history, music, special educational needs.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very good school that provides a very effective education for its pupils.** Pupils enter the school with attainment that is broadly average and by Year 6 attain standards that are well above average. The curriculum is broad and well balanced. Teaching is very good and as a result pupils' learning is highly successful. Pupils are very well behaved and have very good attitudes to learning. The leadership and management of the school are very good and the governing body provides strong support. The school gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' achievement is very good and by Year 6 most attain standards that are well above average in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Teaching is very good and teachers maintain high expectations of pupils' performance and behaviour.
- The ethos of the school is very good and strongly promotes pupils' happiness and well-being.
- The teachers and support staff work well together to form a very effective team.
- Assessment systems are not sufficiently well developed to pinpoint what pupils need to learn next.
- Pupils' personal development is very good; they have very positive attitudes to learning, respect each other and enjoy excellent relationships.
- The co-ordinator for provision for pupils with special educational needs is not allocated enough time to ensure that the school's policy for these pupils is fully implemented.

The school has successfully tackled the main issues raised in the last inspection report. The quality of teaching has improved significantly and pupils' achievement is now much better than it was. Planning has improved but the school has rightly identified that assessment systems need developing further because they do not always show what pupils need to learn next. Standards have improved in English, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved. Accommodation has not improved and the lack of a proper school hall impedes the teaching of physical education. Overall the school is now much more effective than it was and there has been very good improvement.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	A	B	A	A
mathematics	B	A	A*	A*
science	A	C	A*	A*

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average*

*Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2. The \* symbol indicates that results are very high and are among the top 5% of schools nationally.*

**Pupils' achievement is very good.** Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage and most exceed the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. The very good teaching in Years 1 to 6 and the consistently challenging work ensure pupils' achievement is very good. By Year 2 standards are well above average in reading, writing, mathematics, science and ICT. By Year 6 standards are well above average in English, mathematics, science and ICT. The school's performance in national tests tends to fluctuate from year to year and reflects the wide variations in the characteristics of each year group. Great caution is needed when interpreting the comparative data because the very small number of pupils involved means that a single pupil can have a substantial effect on the school's overall grading. Also the proportion of pupils with special educational needs varies from year to year. Furthermore, the proportion of pupils who enter and leave the school partway through this stage of their schooling is higher than in most schools and tends to have a negative impact on the continuity of pupils' learning. The school's overall performance in the national tests for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 in 2004 was very high. There is likely to be a decline in the school's performance in the tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2005 because there is a high proportion of pupils in the year group who have significant learning difficulties.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good.** They have very good attitudes to their work and are confident. Behaviour is very good. Relationships are excellent, and pupils work and play happily together. Attendance and punctuality are good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a very good quality of education. The quality of teaching and learning is very good.** Teaching in the reception year is good. Teaching and learning are very good in Years 1 to 6. Pupils' very positive attitudes to work and their very good behaviour support learning well. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the quality of teaching and to the school's effectiveness. The good quality of care and guidance helps to foster self-esteem and confidence, which contribute to pupils' successful learning. Resources are good and accommodation is adequate.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and the management of the school are very good.** The acting headteacher's very effective leadership helps to ensure that the school has continued to run efficiently during a period of change. There is a strong sense of teamwork and a commitment to continuing improvement and raising standards. The governing body is effective, gives good support and ensures that all statutory responsibilities are met but it does not monitor provision for pupils with special educational needs in sufficient depth and the workload of the special needs co-ordinator is excessive. Finances are managed very well and are directed towards the most important areas of priority.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with the education that the school provides for their children. They particularly like the individual care and attention that each pupil

receives. Pupils are pleased with their school and particularly enjoy the friendships they make. They would like a proper hall for physical education (PE).

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Develop assessment systems so that data on pupils' attainment and progress can be readily used to plan the next steps in learning.
- Monitor provision for pupils with special educational needs more closely and ensure that the school's policy for these pupils is fully implemented.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

*Achievement is a measure of how well pupils are doing, taking their progress and their capability into account.*

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Pupils' achievement overall is very good and standards are well above average.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well in the reception year, where good foundations for further learning are laid.
- Pupils' very good achievement means that most attain high standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT by Year 6.
- The school's performance in national tests is often well above national averages and confirms the high standards that pupils attain.

#### **Commentary**

1. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well in Years 1 to 6. Boys and girls achieve equally well. They enter the school with standards that are broadly average and leave with standards that are well above average.
2. Children's achievement is good in the Foundation Stage, and most attain standards that are above average in relation to the goals expected for children at the end of the reception year. They make good progress in learning to read and most read simple texts confidently. Most write simple sentences and show an awareness of how full stops are used. They enjoy counting to very high numbers and recognise number patterns, such as sequences of even numbers.
3. Pupils' achievement is very good in Years 1 and 2. By Year 2, most pupils attain standards that are well above average in reading, writing, mathematics, science and ICT. Most read confidently. They enjoy stories and poems. They are good at finding information from non-fiction books. They know how to set up a fair test in science. They have a good understanding of the conditions needed for living things to flourish. They use laptop computers well for word processing, creating pictograms and bar charts and for drawing colourful pictures.
4. Pupils continue to achieve very well in Years 3 to 6. By Year 6, pupils attain standards that are well above average in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Most read fluently and with good expression and they have a wide knowledge of children's literature. In mathematics, most recognise a sequence of prime numbers and understand how to calculate percentages. In science they explain the functions of the organs of the human body, such as the heart, and have a very good understanding of forces. They are very good at finding information from the Internet.
5. The results of national tests confirm inspection findings. In the tests and assessments for pupils in Year 2 in 2004 the school's performance was very high in reading, writing, mathematics and science and ranked among the top 5 per cent of schools in the nation. The school's overall performance in 2005 is exactly the same as last year's in reading and mathematics but not quite as high in writing. The groups of pupils that take the tests each year are very small and fluctuations in the school's performance are likely to reflect the different characteristics in each group, especially the proportion of pupils with special educational

needs. However, the school's overall performance has been improving rapidly since 2002 and the rate of improvement has been greater than the rate nationally. Last year, and again this year, all pupils attained the national target of Level 2 in science, representing very high attainment. In 2004 a much higher proportion of pupils than nationally exceeded the national target of Level 2 and attained the higher Level 3 standard in reading, writing and mathematics. This indicates that the more able pupils are appropriately challenged and helped to attain the standards of which they are capable.

6. The school's performance in national tests for pupils in Year 6 was well above average in English in 2004 and very high, ranking among the top 5 per cent of schools nationally, in mathematics and science. The proportion who exceeded the national target of Level 4 and attained the higher Level 5 standard was well above average in English and science and very high in mathematics. Standards have been improving rapidly since 2002, especially in mathematics. The school's performance was not quite as good in 2005 as there is a much greater proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this year's group. Nevertheless, all pupils attained the national target of Level 4 in science. In mathematics and science, half attained the higher Level 5 standard. In English well over a third attained Level 5. This demonstrates teachers' high expectations of pupils' ability to achieve well and attain high standards. The improving trend in the school's performance has been greater than the trend nationally. The rapid improvement coincides with the appointment of a new headteacher and new teachers in 2001. The school's performance in the national tests confirms pupils' very good achievement and also substantiates the very good teaching the school provides and pupils' very good learning. Pupils' achievement and the standards they attain have improved significantly since the last inspection, when standards were average.
7. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well and make very good progress. This is because they receive very good support and teachers' planning takes account of the very wide range of ability in each class. The good number of well-trained teaching assistants makes a strong contribution to this support. Teachers work in close partnership with teaching assistants and all staff are very sensitive to individual needs. Tasks are modified to match the varying stages of development that each pupil has attained. Through very good management, the school has achieved a very good ratio of adults to pupils. This enables small teaching groups to be organised so that pupils receive close, often individual, attention. For most of the week there are on average around seventeen pupils in each class and the teaching groups are often much smaller when teaching assistants are involved. This is a major factor in enabling teachers to assist pupils to achieve so very well.
8. In religious education, pupils attain standards that are in line with the expectations described in the locally agreed syllabus. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection, when progress was unsatisfactory and standards were below average.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance and punctuality are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very positive attitudes and behaviour contribute very well to pupils' achievements.
- The school sets very high expectations for pupils' conduct.
- The school promotes excellent relationships and very high levels of racial harmony.

### **Commentary**

9. The school has maintained above average attendance levels since the last inspection, reflecting pupils' enthusiasm for school. There is no unexplained absence. The school

has good procedures to promote attendance; for instance, on the first day of a pupil's absence telephone calls are made home promptly if the parent has not contacted the school to explain the reason for the absence.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.9	School data	0.1
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

10. Attitudes, behaviour and relationships have improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils show very high levels of interest in the activities offered by the school. For instance, during a literacy lesson in Years 5 and 6, all pupils were bursting to answer questions about contrasts in India. There is also much interest in school clubs and educational visits. Children in the Foundation Stage are developing good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is very good. By the end of reception most exceed the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development. For the most part pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes to school and enjoy their learning.
11. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils are very well aware of right and wrong. The excellent relationships that have been established between staff and pupils, and among pupils themselves, support social development well. They participate very enthusiastically in after-school activities, including the after-school club and games, which helps them to develop social skills effectively. Paired and group activities in lessons allow pupils to learn how to negotiate and take turns. They gain a good understanding of moral, social and cultural issues through their study of literature. In particular they learned, for example, to understand the unfair distribution of wealth in India by studying Mark Twain's writings when he was on a lecture tour of the sub-continent. Spirituality is developed well in the daily acts of collective worship, where pupils are invited to reflect on Christian beliefs as well as those from other religions, such as Buddhism. Pupils often express awe at the natural world as when, for example, examining the delicate structure of small insects, or when watching a short film of a bean growing from seed.
12. Most pupils behave very well in the classroom, at break-times and as they move around the school. Procedures to encourage good behaviour are very good. A very small number of pupils with special educational needs present very challenging behaviour due to their particular condition. Generally this is handled very well by teachers, teaching assistants and pupils. Staff often praise pupils for their good behaviour and uses certificates and house points very effectively. School records show that bullying is not a significant issue. The rate of exclusion is very low and there were no exclusions in the last school year. The school uses exclusion as a last resort when all else fails to deal with serious and disruptive behaviour.
13. Opportunities are seized by all staff to stress the importance of good relationships and teamwork. The school has a very effective race equality policy. Pupils from different ethnic heritages work and play happily together. The inspection team was very impressed at the acting headteacher's assembly where teamwork was discussed through religious teachings, stories and parables. Pupils learnt an important lesson as they heard what inevitably happened in a story where different parts of the body refused to co-operate with each other. Pupils were led towards a good understanding of inter-dependence and learnt that all elements are key components in the successful functioning of any organism or organisation.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching and learning are very good. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to pupils' needs. Good arrangements are in place to ensure the welfare and care of pupils, and their views are very well sought and acted upon. There are good links with parents, the community and other schools.

## Teaching and learning

Teaching is very good and so pupils' learning is highly effective. Assessment systems are satisfactory but are not always used enough to plan the next steps in learning.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers prepare interesting lessons that motivate pupils well.
- The good ratio of adults to pupils allows for small teaching groups where each individual receives a great deal of attention and support.
- The computer-linked display boards are used well to stimulate pupils' interest.
- Data from assessments of pupils' attainment and progress are not used to plan the next steps in learning.

## Commentary

14. The quality of teaching and learning for children in the reception year is good, and it is very good for pupils in Years 1 to 6. Teachers plan lessons in great detail and sequences of lessons are based on series of planning schemes that promote the cumulative development of skills, knowledge and understanding in each subject. This represents a great improvement since the last inspection, when planning was identified as a significant weakness. The teaching of English, mathematics, science and ICT is very good and consequently, pupils' learning is very effective. The very good management of the school has concentrated on maintaining a very favourable ratio of adults to pupils in each class. This has made a major contribution to the quality of teaching and learning.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 16 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	9	5	1	0	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.*

15. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and teachers maintain a business-like approach to learning. Relationships are excellent so that pupils have no concerns about asking questions if there is something they do not understand fully. In a geography lesson, for example, a pupil interrupted the teacher to ask, 'What is shingle?' All adults are clear about their roles in each lesson and give good support to the different groups, including those with special educational needs, within each class. At the beginning of most lessons teachers usually make presentations that include specific teaching points and invite discussion. Teachers are very sensitive to the needs of all and ensure that the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are fully involved by making sure that these groups are asked questions which they are likely to be able to answer. The pupils then proceed to complete the graded tasks set. At this point the teacher and teaching assistants give close support to different groups of pupils, who are often at widely varying stages of development. This good support assists all groups

to achieve success and helps all pupils to make good progress in their learning. They come together again towards the end of each lesson to share learning. At this point teachers assess how successful their teaching has been through discussion, and invite pupils to indicate how well they think they have mastered new concepts or skills. The teaching for pupils with special educational needs is equally as good as that for all the other groups.

16. The new computer-linked display boards make a powerful contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers use their laptops well to prepare colourful and stimulating material that captures pupils' interest. Much of the material is derived from the Internet. In a science lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2 the teacher projected a sequence of time-delayed films that clearly showed each stage of the germination and growth of a broad bean. Although the children had grown their own beans in class, this sequence captured the stages of growth brilliantly and added another dimension to the depth of pupils' understanding. In an excellent English lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, pupils listened to Indian music while watching images of India projected onto the whiteboard. This helped them to appreciate much more fully Mark Twain's observations about the contrasts to be found in India. In an assembly, images of the Buddha were projected that stimulated thoughtful questions. Pupils themselves use the boards as when, for example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 added illustrations to their binary diagrams in science. Although these boards are new to most teachers and although they are still exploring the full potential of this technology, they are already having a major impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers have readily and enthusiastically adopted this new technology and use it well as part of their teaching repertoire.
17. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and marking helps pupils to understand how they might improve their work. At the end of each unit of work teachers evaluate what pupils have learnt, but there are as yet no assessment systems that show how much progress has been made by each individual, and that are used to set targets for the next steps in learning. Pupils themselves are not aware of what they should learn next or of learning targets. Consequently there is a lack of clarity about exactly what stage of development each pupil has reached and what the next steps in learning should be. The direction of learning is not as clear as it should be and so opportunities could be missed to accelerate progress and further enhance pupils' achievement.

## **The curriculum**

The overall quality of the curriculum is good, with a good range of extra-curricular activities. The accommodation is adequate and the environs of the school are very good. Resources are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned and gives many good learning experiences.
- Good opportunities are available for curriculum enrichment.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is mostly good but pupils' individual education plans are not always reviewed as regularly as they should be.
- There is a very good match of teaching and support staff to the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

18. There has been a good improvement in the curriculum since the time of the last inspection. Improvements in curricular planning have made a major contribution to the raising of the standards that pupils attain. The curriculum for the reception children is particularly good and is closely linked to the early learning goals that pupils are expected to attain by the end of the reception year. The good range of activities that teachers and teaching assistants plan and organise are designed to promote learning systematically in all six areas of learning. This

thorough curricular planning and preparation helps to ensure that all children achieve well. The leadership and management of the school have worked hard to achieve this good improvement in planning and it has had a major impact on improving pupils' achievement. Teachers now know exactly what has to be taught each term and skills, knowledge and understanding are now taught systematically.

19. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements, including the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and collective worship. Across the school the curriculum is broad and focused on pupils learning new skills specific to each subject. The acquisition of new skills is achieved through a well-balanced range of carefully planned activities and learning experiences. These cater well for the needs of all pupils. Topic planning now provides a good depth of study compared to the curriculum in place at the time of the previous inspection. There is a two-year rolling programme of topics designed to cover National Curriculum requirements in Years 1 and 2 and a four-year programme for pupils in Years 3 to 6. This ensures that pupils in the mixed age classes do not have to repeat any topics unnecessarily. The national strategies for the Foundation Stage, literacy and numeracy are well established.
20. In spite of the relatively small number of teaching and support staff, the range of extra-curricular activities for art, drama and sports, as well as the after-school club, is good. This extra provision is made possible through the close co-operation and support of parents. There are excellent opportunities in the summer term for pupils to learn to swim in the school's own training pool. All pupils who are learning to swim practise weekly thanks to a member of staff being a fully qualified instructor. She is supported well by parents with relevant health and safety qualifications. Only the oldest, more advanced pupils have to travel into the nearest town for their lessons as the on-site pool is not large enough for them to fully extend their skills.
21. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is generally good. Pupils are supported well in class, and teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the very good teaching they receive. Pupils' needs are identified early in their school careers and individual education plans help teachers to plan activities that support learning and help pupils to make good progress towards their individual targets. There is a very good number of experienced teaching support assistants who help such pupils learn in class. However, the special needs co-ordinator has only a very small amount of time each month to monitor learning and progress and keep up to date with developments. She gives good guidance to teachers, parents and support staff but it is possible for pupils to 'slip through the net'. Individual education plans are not always reviewed regularly and this contravenes school policy and guidance given in the nationally agreed Code of Practice for these pupils. Consequently the school cannot yet be assured that everything is being done that should be done to provide each individual with appropriate support, though the problem had recently been identified by the school. In spite of its small size, the school has a good number of skilled classroom teachers to support the teaching of the curriculum well. Subjects are led well by staff. Many have specialist training in their subject and all keep up with new developments.
22. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, and the school grounds provide a good learning environment. The school makes good use of the village's climbing apparatus that is adjacent to the field. The school is 'open-plan' in design and there is no school hall. Although the village hall is available for school use, it is not properly equipped for teaching physical education and in poor weather it is not easily accessible. Consequently the school finds it difficult to provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to cover the full statutory programme of physical education, especially in gymnastics. There is a small outside learning area for children in the reception class where they

can run and ride, paint and plant. In lessons pupils have a good range of resources, which are up to date and in good condition. The two main classrooms are equipped with an interactive whiteboard as well as computers for pupils' use. The bank of laptop computers all have a wireless link to the Internet and are used well by pupils. There is no headteacher's room or any room where parents can meet with staff to discuss pupils' progress and welfare confidentially. This is an unsatisfactory situation as the need often arises for such meetings, especially with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. Also, as from September 2005, teachers will have time for preparing, planning and assessment but there is no room available for them to do this.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good. The provision of advice, support and guidance is good and pupils are very well involved in aspects of the school's development.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- New children settle into the school quickly through very good induction procedures.
- Pupils enjoy very good, trusting relationships with staff.
- Pupils feel valued because staff listen to and act on their views.

## Commentary

23. New children are gradually and sensitively introduced to the reception class. The school provides good written information to parents, who can also attend an induction event where the school's policies are explained and the school nurse is also present. Older pupils joining the school in other year groups are allocated with a *buddy* and this too is very effective.
24. Procedures for child protection are good. The designated officer deals with any issues effectively. All staff receive good written guidance about the school's policy and staff are vigilant at all times. Arrangements for first aid and fire procedures are good. Safety risk assessments are undertaken as required and the school is undertaking a thorough review to ensure that all subjects taught are risk assessed with equal rigour. Governors are very closely involved in promoting health and safety. Several governors, for instance, recently worked alongside pupils and shared learning activities with them regarding healthy lifestyles.
25. Staff know pupils well and give them good advice and guidance based on monitoring. Any individual pupil issues are recorded in their personal files and opportunities are grasped to address any problems through teaching and personal support. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well in class, where they receive teaching of a high order. Although provision for pupils with special educational needs is mostly good, pupils' individual educational plans are not always reviewed as regularly as, according to the school's policy, they should be. Consequently the school cannot guarantee that they all receive all the care and support that they should. The school recently recognised this shortcoming and has already taken steps to remedy the situation.
26. Pupils are happy at this school. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent, reflecting the school's caring family ethos very well. Pupils are confident in reporting any worries or concerns they may have, for instance, regarding bullying.
27. There are many opportunities for pupils to give their views about the school. The school council provides very good chances for pupils to discuss issues and learn about good citizenship, decision-making and democracy. A *comments box* is available for all pupils to use. Pupils' ideas are very much welcomed and acted upon, for instance, regarding accommodation and initiatives such as the *look-out patrol*, a playground responsibility for the oldest pupils.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a good partnership with parents. Links with other schools, colleges and the wider community are also good.



## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents receive good information about the school, the work that their children have covered and the standards they attain.
- Parents make a good contribution to pupils' learning at school and at home.
- Links with other schools support transition well.
- Links in the wider community enrich learning.

## **Commentary**

28. The school welcomes parents as partners in the education of their children. The acting headteacher and staff are very approachable and always make time to discuss any issues. Complaints procedures are good.
29. Parents receive good information about the school through the prospectus and attractive newsletters each month. Parents also appreciate a timely curricular 'map' that provides good information about forthcoming work in each class. Pupils' annual reports provide parents with much information about standards, achievements and areas for improvement. The school has now established satisfactory arrangements for involving and informing parents about the progress of pupils who have special educational needs. However, this aspect of provision was, until recently, unsatisfactory as consultation with parents did not comply with the school's written policy.
30. The parents and teachers association organises many successful social and fundraising events. Money raised is used to support the school and provide additional learning resources for pupils. Parent helpers also give their time generously to the school by assisting with swimming, teaching the recorder, playing the piano in assembly, working in the library and accompanying school visits. Parental support with learning at home is good, especially with homework tasks.
31. Links with other primary schools are good, for instance, training courses are regularly shared between staff and governors at local schools. Most pupils transfer to the local village college. Staff from this school regularly lead science lessons for older pupils. Pupils in Year 6 attend a very well planned two-day induction event at the high school. Locally agreed transition projects in English, mathematics and science are well developed and are another reason for the successful transfer of pupils to the next stage in their education.
32. Wider community links include those with the Fen Drayton Pre-school Playgroup – many children attending the school come from there. The playgroup children are always invited to community assemblies. A member of the clergy from a local church leads an assembly every fortnight and this makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Other regular visitors include a puppet theatre group, musicians, artists and authors. The *Life Education Bus* provides pupils with additional guidance about healthy living and drugs education. Educational visits are well planned and support learning positively.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The acting headteacher provides very good leadership and is very well supported by senior staff. The management of the school is very good. The governance of the school is good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The acting headteacher has maintained the school's very good ethos during a period of significant change.
- The governing body is innovative and has good long-term strategic plans for the school's continuing development.
- The co-ordinator for special educational needs has far too little time allocated to monitor provision and to ensure that the school's policy for pupils with special educational needs is always fully implemented.
- Finances are very well managed.

## Commentary

33. The leadership and management of the school are very good and are very effective in maintaining high standards. The acting headteacher took over the reins in the autumn term when the headteacher was absent in hospital and again in the summer term while the school was awaiting the appointment of a new headteacher. She has succeeded in maintaining the school's very positive and productive learning environment during a period of staff absence and major changes in the school's staff. Governors have been kept very well informed of all school issues by the previous headteacher and the present acting headteacher. The handover of school leadership has been managed smoothly. Working in liaison with the acting headteacher, the newly appointed headteacher has already begun to draft a new school improvement plan to guide developments during the forthcoming school year. The plan focuses clearly on the most important priorities for further improvement. Improved assessment systems feature as a matter of priority.
34. Subject leaders manage their areas of responsibility very well. They work hard to support colleagues and pupils in the pursuit of high standards. They have a very good overview of provision across the school. They monitor and evaluate standards rigorously and identify areas for improvement. They analyse pupils' work and test results carefully to see if there are any aspects of their subjects where pupils might need extra support. One area of relative weakness is the use of assessment. Subject leaders recognise the need for improvements and are pleased that the new headteacher is already in the process of introducing new assessment procedures.
35. The governance of the school is good. Governors are closely associated with the school and have a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. However, there is one shortcoming. The governing body has not monitored the implementation of its policy for pupils with special educational needs closely enough. It has not checked to determine whether the policy is being operated as intended. The policy has not been fully implemented. This is mainly because the co-ordinator has not been allocated sufficient time to fulfil her role. The school is aware of this and has already taken measures to remedy the situation.
36. The governing body is ably led by the chair, who works extremely hard on behalf of the school. The school governors have worked hard to set up the after-school club. This facility is welcomed by many parents. Parents also appreciate the careful way in which staffing changes have been successfully managed. The governing body conducts good surveys of parents' opinions about the quality of education provided by the school and invites suggestions for improvement. Governors carefully consider all the issues facing the school and have been creative in their management of the recruitment of staff. They have succeeded in devising a good long-term strategic plan designed to maintain the very favourable ratio of adults per pupil. The relatively large financial underspend is earmarked to maintain the very good staffing levels over the next few years. The governing body has conserved funds because governors have been determined to maintain three classes for most of the week so that teaching groups for most lessons are small. They have been innovative in appointing a part-time, non-class-based headteacher for three days a week to lead and manage the school from the beginning of next term. She is to be supported by a highly respected and able member of staff who will assume responsibility as assistant headteacher for the other two days. By offering this part-time option the governing body has been able to spread its recruitment net further than many similar sized schools manage to do.

**Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	230 494
Total expenditure	241 163
Expenditure per pupil	4 823

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	39 508
Balance carried forward to the next	28 839

37. Although the expenditure per pupil is much higher than the national average, it is around the average for schools of this size. Taking into account pupils' very good achievement, the very good teaching and learning and the well above average standards that pupils attain, the school provides very good value for money.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

38. Children are admitted part-time to the school in the September of the year in which they are five, all becoming full time by the end of the autumn term. One over-arching factor which benefits the youngest children when they start school is that they join a class that is already established. The new children are supported well by the older ones and quickly understand school routines. Their development is supported well as they see the older ones as role models. This plays a strong part in their developing maturity. The number admitted each year is variable but is frequently small. Children show a wide range of attainment on entry but it is broadly average overall. The quality of education provided in the reception year is good. A particular strength of the provision is the way that detailed information is collected about each new child. This initial information is used well in planning a curriculum that is well matched to children's individual learning needs. The leadership and management of provision are good. Planning is very clear and activities are designed to help children to attain the learning goals described in the Foundation Stage curriculum. The class teacher, the Foundation Stage manager and the support assistant, who often works with the children, form an effective team with a clear view as to how the curriculum is to be improved and extended to meet the needs of all children. There is a satisfactory system used to track children's progress and to match what is being taught to what the reception group needs to learn. However, the system does not include setting learning targets for individual pupils or for adjusting tasks so that all are appropriately challenged. Consequently teachers do not focus closely enough on the particular needs of each pupil and cannot be sure that each is making as much progress as they possibly could.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children make good progress in developing their independence and confidence.
- A good range of activities stimulates the children's interest and curiosity.
- Adults have high expectations of children's ability to organise their own resources and to be responsible for their own belongings.
- Good relationships enable children to develop their confidence and self-esteem.

#### **Commentary**

39. Children achieve well because of the good range of activities available and the secure environment in which they work and play. Children part from their parents and carers confidently. They look after their own possessions well. They settle quickly to their tasks because they are well motivated to learn. They make good, rapid progress in developing their social skills. Children are happy to accept responsibility for helping to tidy and manage the classroom. They respond well to simple responsibilities and get out and put away resources with no fuss or bother. Activities in the classroom stimulate their interest and curiosity and they show good concentration for their age. They work and play alongside other children happily. Children are good at sharing resources and

toys outside but occasionally there is insufficient challenge associated with activities and then children wander from activity to activity with no particular purpose.

40. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers and classroom assistants are especially good at asking searching questions that are thought provoking and help children to reflect on their learning. Adults build children's self-esteem well through praise and encouragement, so they tackle new activities with interest and confidence. Good relationships develop children's self-esteem and they respond well to adults across the school, as well as to other, older pupils. By the end of the reception year children have exceeded the early learning goals.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Opportunities for children to talk and share ideas are very good, frequent and stimulating.
- Adults encourage children's interest in books and their enjoyment of stories.
- The structured development of children's reading skills is carefully planned and a good phonics scheme, linked to the national literacy project for reception children, is used well.

### **Commentary**

41. Children achieve well because teaching is good and as a result they learn effectively. By the end of the reception year children have exceeded the expected learning goals. Children are encouraged to listen to adults and to each other and to take turns when asking and answering questions. They develop their spoken vocabulary well, through play with their friends and discussions with their teachers and support staff. Adults encourage children to speak clearly and to use grammar accurately at all times. They give children good models of how to speak in sentences and set a good example by using a wide vocabulary. Children play well with each other and chat about what they are doing. For instance, the class 'Sea-Life Centre' and the sand and water play areas are key spots for imaginative and lively discussions.
42. Adults stimulate children's interest in books well, especially non-fiction books with factual information about sea creatures. Children also thoroughly enjoy stories and rhymes. Adults constantly seek to extend children's vocabulary through, for instance, creating a class 'encyclopaedia' about sea creatures. Early reading and writing skills are taught well to the whole group and where particular needs are identified to the individual child. Children label their work well with their name and write simple sentences, grouping letters together to make recognisable words to use in writing stories and news and to explain their pictures. Adults monitor each activity well.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good links are made between mathematics and other areas of learning.

- Staff provide good opportunities to extend children's understanding of number.

### **Commentary**

43. Teaching is good and children achieve well. Most children exceed the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Children are especially fascinated by counting to very high numbers and they demonstrate good awareness of sequences such as the days of the week and even numbers. They are good at adding or taking one more or one less. Children also have a good understanding of shapes in two and three dimensions such as squares, circles, cones and cubes. Children work out how much sand or water would fill a jug, jar or bucket in their work on capacity and they recognise the different coins.
44. Counting is a regular activity and most children start to count in response to adults' questions of 'How many are there?' Number recognition and mathematical skills are taught well and opportunities are provided to extend children's understanding of number in many activities. For example, adults encourage children to count creatures in the 'Sea Life Centre', and the number of legs that sea creatures, such as starfish and crabs, have. Books such as the story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' help children to learn the days of the week and to measure and compare the size of the caterpillar as he eats his way through an increasing number of food items each day.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A good range of activities promotes children's interest and curiosity.
- Teachers' planning is detailed and thorough.

### **Commentary**

45. Teaching and learning are good so that children achieve well and most exceed the early learning goals before the end of the reception year. Pupils have good opportunities to learn through first-hand experiences. Teachers have carefully planned a full, rich curriculum to stimulate children's learning by encouraging them to think, concentrate, co-operate with others and understand what they are doing and why. Children have been introduced to many areas of learning, including science, environmental studies, history and geography, through the topic on sea life. This has included a successful visit to the local Sea Life Centre. This study built very effectively on what children already knew and further stimulated their interest and curiosity about the world around them. For instance, children made a model sea world, stocked with models of crabs, lobsters, fish and other sea creatures. Through observation at the centre they know how such creatures move, that some crawl and others swim across the bottom of the sea. Through their literacy skills they can find other information and are building up their own encyclopaedia, with photographs linked to their researches. Children also have a good understanding of what conditions plants need to grow successfully. They have planted beans ready to grow in tubs in the outside area and have ensured that all the roots are covered with soil; that the plants had light, heat and water as well as rich compost in which to grow. Good opportunities to develop knowledge and skills are promoted through role-play activities, especially in the

outdoor classroom, where children set up a builder's business. They are conscious of health and safety when working together in class or out in the playground.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are many good opportunities for children to develop their physical skills and develop dexterity.
- Fun activities stimulate children's balance and control.

### **Commentary**

46. Teaching and learning are good so that children achieve well and most exceed the early learning goals before the end of the reception year. Children's skills when using simple tools, brushes and scissors, and writing equipment such as pencils and crayons, develop well during the reception year. Good opportunities are provided to strengthen fingers and develop manipulative skills and nearly all children use scissors with good skill. Children's ability to write letters and numbers clearly and with precision is well developed. There are good opportunities for children to write in lessons and in the role-play area. By the end of reception their letter formation is accurate and their writing recognisable. Children's pictures show good control of brushes and crayons and children use a range of equipment well in the art on display such as printing, painting and sketching. The playground apparatus gives good opportunities for children to climb safely, and to pursue their adventurous games. They are developing good balance, mobility and control in their movements. Fun activities in the reception area, such as using a digger to fill wheelbarrows to cart it away, also promote children's balance and control effectively.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

47. No specific lessons were seen during the inspection so it is not possible to make a judgement on teaching and learning or overall provision in this area. However, it is evident from pupils' work that they achieve well and most exceed the early learning goals before the end of the reception year. Children have a good number of exciting opportunities to express themselves in imaginative play, in art and in music. A good range of opportunities encourage children to investigate different materials and colours to produce imaginative pictures, patterns and drawings. Working the digging machine in the outside area encourages children to develop their imagination well as they move compost to create an area to plant out their beans. Two boys worked well together as one repeatedly filled the other's barrow and so they pretended to establish a building company and set up their builder's sign in the yard. In work linked to science and ecology, children are creating a class encyclopaedia, with digital photographs, pictures and text linked to the world found under the sea. As a result of such carefully prepared opportunities, children's learning is well supported. They are able to co-operate with others, sharing tools and equipment as well as ideas.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**



Provision in English is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achievement in reading is very good; standards are well above average and pupils develop a keen interest in literature.
- Pupils' writing is very well developed and most write clearly and effectively.
- Teaching is very good and sometimes excellent.
- Teachers use the computer-linked display boards well to capture pupils' interest.

### **Commentary**

48. Pupils' achievement is very good and most attain standards that are well above average. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were average.
49. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make very good progress in reading and writing. They speak well and with increasing confidence. Their handwriting is neatly formed. They develop a good knowledge of children's authors and most read widely. By Year 2, standards in reading and writing are well above average. Pupils learn how to improve the effectiveness of their writing by using powerful adjectives and interesting similes. They develop a good understanding of the function of different parts of speech, spell common words accurately and punctuate their work properly.
50. By Year 6, standards in writing are well above average and most pupils write powerful pieces of imaginative writing, well-constructed non-fiction and sensitive poetry. They have very good opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills. All enter freely into discussions in the small teaching groups. Many express their views strongly and argue points logically. Good links are made with other subjects such as history, where pupils wrote their own biographies of Henry VII. One such piece started with the sentence, *'Everybody knows about the life of Henry VIII but few people know much about his father Henry VII.'* There followed eleven pages of well-researched detail, written in the pupils' own words. Another powerful piece of writing purported to be an eye-witness account of the Viking raid on Lindesfarne in 793 AD. Pupils have a very good understanding of the difference between the language used to write a formal letter of complaint and an informal one to a friend. They learn how to draft and re-draft their writing and how to include imagery through the use of metaphors. They capture accurately the tone of voice and the vocabulary that typify particular characters when writing dialogue. They use technical terms, such as personification, accurately. They develop good note taking strategies and learn how to assemble both sides of a persuasive argument. Most write with a neat, flowing cursive hand. The quantity and quality of work demonstrate the teacher's high expectations of pupils' ability to attain high standards.
51. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have high levels of expertise and a good knowledge of both the technicalities of language and of children's literature. Teachers maintain high expectations of pupils' performance. In one very good lesson in Years 1 and 2, for example, pupils used their knowledge of the work of the children's author Martin Waddell to make a comparison with the work of Roald Dahl. In particular they compared the way in which the two authors developed 'fantasy characters'. Pupils in this class develop a good understanding of different genres, such as traditional tales, factual accounts and adventure stories. Traditional stories are used exceptionally well as a vehicle for many different forms of writing. Pupils write letters of apology from Goldilocks to the Three Bears. Excellent eye-witness reports included some lively writing, *'Do you think that the Wolf meant to eat the Three Little Pigs?'*, *'No he does not eat meat.'* The witness's name turned out to be Pinocchio. The computer-linked white board is used well to illustrate teaching material and to record, for example, similes suggested by pupils.

52. In a very good lesson in Years 3 and 4, pupils studied 'The Balaclava Story' by George Leyton. They analysed the strong feelings aroused by the theft of a balaclava. The teacher expertly led a discussion on motives, mixed emotions, relationships and the moral dilemmas posed. One particularly good strategy was putting a pupil in the 'hot seat' and asking him to adopt the persona of the main character of the story and to answer questions posed by the rest of the class. This encouraged a thought provoking session and provided good opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills. Pupils demonstrated a remarkable depth of understanding of the story and of the hero's feelings of guilt and remorse.
53. In an excellent lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6 the computer-linked display board was used exceptionally well. Here pupils were studying 'This is Indeed India' by Mark Twain. This piece of writing features the fabulous contrasts that typify India. The teacher had prepared a very good range of pictures taken from the Internet, such as a photograph of the magnificent Taj Mahal and crowded Indian hovels, to illustrate the contrasts. The sequence of pictures was projected as Indian music played in the background. After a well-led discussion and a period of reflection, pupils settled thoughtfully to create their own pieces in the same style as Mark Twain's. They understood exactly what was expected of them and were highly motivated to write. Another especially good feature of the lesson was the teacher's carefully directed questioning. Questions asked of pupils with special educational needs were carefully matched to their ability to answer, whilst much more challenging questions, requiring much reasoning and deduction, were directed at the more able pupils. In this way all were included in the question and answer session and all were able to experience success.
54. The subject is very well led and managed. The acting headteacher is the subject leader and she has maintained the impetus provided by the previous subject leader and has ensured that high standards are maintained. One notable aspect of the leadership of the subject is the encouragement that staff have had in the use of their laptop computers to prepare lessons for use with the electronic display boards. Although these boards are a recent acquisition, the teachers have rapidly got to grips with using them well. They do much to capture pupils' interest and enrich learning experiences. The school has identified the need to further develop assessment systems. The systems used sum up what pupils have learned but are not used enough to set individual targets for future learning. Pupils are not sufficiently involved in discussions about what they should learn next. This lack of a tight focus on each individual's learning means that the school cannot be absolutely certain that all pupils are achieving as well as they possibly could.

## **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

55. Teachers make good use of opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their literacy skills. Examples include researching for information on the Internet, where pupils have good opportunities to practise reading skills. There are particularly good opportunities in geography and history for pupils to use their literacy skills effectively, especially when writing historical biographies and when describing the journey of rivers from source to estuary. Pupils practise their speaking and listening skills well when discussing different religious beliefs in religious education. Many hold strong views about environmental issues and express them well.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve very well because of teachers' very good knowledge of the curriculum.
- Very good support is given to pupils with special educational needs.

- There are good opportunities for pupils to use and apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum.

## Commentary

56. There has been a very good improvement since the previous inspection. Consistently good and better teaching has led to an improvement in levels of achievement for all pupils. All pupils achieve very well from an average starting point on entry to the school. Standards in Year 2 are well above average. Standards in the present Year 6 are also well above average, though both groups of pupils are so small that results over time can be very variable. These results are about the same as the test results in 2004, which showed attainment to be very high when compared with schools nationally. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in lessons because they receive very good quality support from teaching assistants. All pupils have good, very positive attitudes to their work and all behave very well in lessons. This again supports the high standards achieved.
57. The good and often very good quality of teaching and learning is the key factor in the very good rates of achievement. All lessons are well planned with work carefully set at different levels to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those working at higher levels. One particularly strong feature of the teaching is the way in which teachers provide a great variety of activities and include short surprises that hold pupils' interest. In one very good lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, the teacher asked pupils to find the sticky notes that she had stuck under their chairs. These were graded by colour so that each ability group in the class was appropriately challenged. Each group came to the front of the class, held up their numbers and attempted to find a pattern in the sequence, which ranged in difficulty from multiples of three to a set of prime numbers. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' ability to make deductions, solve problems and extract a general principle or formula. In a lesson on discovering patterns in consecutive numbers, for example, a group of higher attaining pupils were asked to discover which sequence of numbers totalled 146. They found out that 35, 36, 37 and 38 gave the correct answer but then they had to explain why. Such thought provoking challenges intrigued the pupils. Pupils also access the Cambridge University mathematics website and successfully tackle the challenges that are provided.
58. Teachers show very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. They use questions very effectively to assess what pupils understand and use this information well to move pupils on to the next stage of learning. All pupils respond very well to teachers' high expectations of their performance and the presentation of work. Marking is careful and gives pupils clear information about how they might improve their work.
59. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject leader has made a major impact on standards. Since she took over the role, the school's performance in national tests has risen sharply. She has reviewed provision for the subject and is striving to ensure that very high standards are maintained. In line with her commitment to improvement, there is regular and rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. She has identified the need to improve assessment systems. Although the systems sum up what pupils have learned, they are not used sufficiently to plan the next steps in learning and to set individual targets for pupils. Pupils are not aware of what the next steps in learning should be. Also, as no individual targets are set, the school cannot be sure that all pupils are being appropriately challenged so that all make the progress of which they are capable. Resources are very good. The co-

ordinator provides a set of challenging problems at different levels for pupils to pick up and solve at odd moments during the day. Pupils thoroughly enjoy these and often give up part of their break time to complete the investigations.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

60. The school has begun to develop a creative and inter-linked curriculum and mathematics is used well in any topic or study where it naturally occurs. Skills in mathematics are used regularly in science and geography as well as in a range of ICT activities. Pupils' learning is promoted well by using mathematics in this way. As part of a very good project on designing a garden in the school, pupils were given a budget of £100 to spend. The competing groups costed the plants for their designs and the range was from £44.00 to £177.40. This was a very good example of using pupils' numeracy skills purposefully.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards have improved tremendously since the previous inspection as the quality of teachers' planning has improved.
- The weakness in pupils' ability to set up investigations and conduct experiments, identified at the time of the last inspection, has been fully resolved.

### **Commentary**

61. Pupils' achievement is very good in Years 1 and 2, and by Year 2 standards are well above average. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 3 to 6 and by Year 6 standards are again well above average. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were average.
62. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers plan very well for all pupils to be actively involved in organising and conducting investigations and experiments rather than just watching demonstrations. This is a very good improvement since the previous inspection, where teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall but too few opportunities were provided for pupils to investigate and experiment. In one particularly good lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teacher linked science very well into a creative investigation. Pupils were to plan and conduct experiments linked to forensics and crime detection. The guitar of a famous musician had been stolen. Pupils had to use all their investigative skills and scientific knowledge to test out different substances such as carpet shampoo, threads of material found at the crime scene and ink from a note, and eliminate suspects one by one. In the end they discovered who the thief was.
63. All teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. They stimulate pupils' interest and curiosity well, giving pupils time to explore their own ideas. Teachers give clear explanations and leave pupils in no doubt about what is expected of them. One particularly effective strategy, often used in English lessons, gives pupils opportunities to discuss problems with a 'talking partner' before sharing ideas in class discussion. This helps pupils to organise their ideas and helps to ensure that all are fully involved. It also promotes faster learning. Pupils are eager to talk, demonstrating their confidence and enthusiasm. Teachers identify the scientific

language to be introduced in lessons and share the new vocabulary with pupils to ensure their full understanding.

64. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are used successfully to plan activities that build on what pupils already know and can do. This assists overall achievement because activities consistently challenge or extend the more able pupils while offering extra support to the less able and those with special educational needs. Pupils are learning to follow a good and well-recognised scientific format, enabling them to plan, conduct, record and evaluate their work well. However, there are no clear learning targets set for individual pupils. Consequently pupils are not sure about what the next steps in learning should be.
65. Leadership and management are very good. Since being appointed, the subject leader has monitored the work in classes very well by checking teachers' planning, through sampling pupils' work and through discussions. She has identified strategies to extend the use of ICT in supporting teaching and learning. She has developed the curriculum from a stage where learning was largely based on acquiring knowledge about different areas of science to developing pupils' investigative and enquiring skills so that they gain a greater depth of understanding. Pupils are now much more closely involved in their own learning. She has a good, clear view of standards through the school and the quality and range of teaching and learning. Her good, carefully thought out development plan is matched to a training plan and a portfolio of work designed to set a high standard and maintain pupils' very good achievement.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achievement is very good, and by Year 2 and again by Year 6 pupils attain standards that are well above average.
- Assessment systems sum up what pupils have learned but do not identify clearly the next steps in learning.

### **Commentary**

66. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well and make good progress in their learning. Most are very good at using word processing procedures and good work was seen where dialogue had been correctly punctuated. A piece of work in the form of a letter of apology from The Gingerbread Man to the Old Lady and the Old Gentleman was well produced and demonstrated well-developed skills. Pupils use paint programs well to create good images inspired by the geometrical works of Piet Mondrian and in the pointillist style after the work of Seurat, as well as images suggested by the work of Monet. They have conducted good research into badger habitats and have produced a good class non-fiction book about insects and 'mini-beasts'. They have a very good understanding of how to use computer programs to handle data. They have created tally charts to record data about their traffic survey, packaging materials, favourite pets, favourite ice cream flavours and eye colour. They have used the computer to produce pictograms and block graphs, which they use to make comparisons such as how much more plastic packaging is used than cardboard.

67. Pupils' achievement is very good in Year 3 to 6 and by Year 6 most attain standards that are well above average. They use spreadsheet operations well to record the costs of different aspects of a school journey. They use computer programs to create graphs of, for example, rainfall in the village. They highlighted the cells and produced a table of information. They then entered formulae to work out the total cost. They write programs to control lights and buzzers in model houses. They have a good understanding of how to use search engines efficiently to find specific web sites by using 'and' or the plus symbol. They have created excellent multi-media presentations, using 'PowerPoint', to describe their time in the school from reception to Year 6. The range and quality of the work produced demonstrate that standards are well above average.
68. The teaching seen was very good and the quality and volume of work produced by pupils confirm that teaching and learning are generally very good. In a good lesson in Years 1 and 2, pupils were introduced to the technique of using a 'binary tree' to help with the classification of animals into distinct sets. Pupils understood that the system was called a 'binary tree' because it has branches like a tree and the program used to illustrate the tree splits boxes in half as it divides. They understood that the division was the result of the answers to questions posed being either 'yes' or 'no' and that there was no room for 'maybe'. Here teaching was precise and detailed. The teacher did not assume that pupils understood the meaning of all the terms being used and dwelt on ensuring that pupils fully understood words such as 'identify'. The confident way in which pupils opened their laptop computers, logged on and quickly selected the appropriate program demonstrated that they are well versed in using computers. The teaching assistant used the computer-linked display board very well to support one group. They enjoyed a form of electronic finger painting to illustrate their binary tree. Pupils used their thinking skills well to frame suitable questions. There were very good opportunities for developing speaking and listening skills as they discussed whether or not penguins could fly and whether zebras have whiskers. All were completely engrossed throughout the session because they had a very clear understanding of what was expected of them and they all thoroughly enjoyed the activity. During the review session they all agreed that a binary tree helped to sort animals into groups according to their particular characteristics and to identify animals according to their specific attributes.
69. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The acting headteacher has been managing provision very well. She has supported teachers and teaching assistants well during an unsettled period in the school's history, caused by staff absence and the retirement of the previous headteacher and subject leader. New computer-linked display boards have been introduced and are already having a marked impact on this subject as well as the quality of teaching and learning in other subjects. Resources are good and standards have been maintained at high levels. Assessments of pupils' attainment are made at the end of each unit of work. These take the form of 'Pupil Review Sheets', where pupils themselves answer questions with statements such as, 'I can use a pictogram to answer questions' or 'I can use control software to switch on an output such as a light bulb'. One good feature of the assessment is that it gives pupils an opportunity to review their learning and reflect on their successes. However, the assessments are not used to fill in any gaps in pupils' understanding or to set targets for further learning.

## **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

70. Pupils use ICT well to support their learning in other subjects. For example, in Years 1 and 2, pupils used computers well to produce neatly presented pieces of written work in literacy lessons, and for conducting research into insects and plants in science. Pupils visited a local nursery as part of a project to develop an area of the school into a garden and used computers to create diagrams of their designs. Computer-linked display boards are used well in many subjects to illustrate material derived from the Internet, to demonstrate programs, to run video clips, to study web pages and to enable pupils to work with appropriate programs. These boards are having a very positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum.

## HUMANITIES

*Work in history, geography and religious education was sampled.*

71. Imaginative teaching was seen in a very good **geography** lesson for pupils in Years 3 to 6. In the playground pupils poured water over a model landscape created with sand and rocks that illustrated the journey of a river exceptionally well. They linked arms to form a chain and moved in an arc and noted that the boy on the outside of the chain had to move further and faster than the girl on the innermost part of the arc. This clearly demonstrated the way in which water moves around the bend of a river. Pupils began to appreciate that material would be eroded from the outside of the bend and deposited on the inside. Back in the classroom the teacher used the computer-linked display board well to project a good animated sequence that showed very clearly how oxbow lakes are formed. One group made a model from plaster of a river's journey from source to the estuary whilst others prepared presentations about what they had learned. It was clear from the high quality of their presentations that they had developed a very good understanding of river systems.
72. An examination of pupils' work in **history**, together with an examination of work on display and discussions with pupils, as well as an analysis of teachers' plans, show that the curriculum is well organised. The school is moving from a distinct scheme of work for each area towards a more creative curriculum, with the skills for history being developed along with specific knowledge and understanding, using a themed approach. For instance, older pupils combined their literacy abilities with their historical researching skills to write biographies of key people in history such as Henry VII. Teachers aim to adapt learning for all pupils effectively, regardless of ages or prior abilities. The curriculum is developing well, resources are well managed and teachers' plans are monitored and evaluated appropriately.
73. Because of the very short duration of the inspection it was not possible to see any lessons in **religious education**. An examination of teachers' lesson plans, the curriculum and samples of pupils' work, along with listening to pupils' answers to questions demonstrating their religious knowledge in assemblies, shows that by Year 2 and again by Year 6 standards are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. This is an improvement in the attainment of pupils seen in the previous inspection, where standards were below average. Pupils demonstrate secure knowledge of the sacred texts, buildings and leaders of the core faiths included in the locally agreed syllabus, especially Christianity and Islam. Festivals, including Christmas and Easter, are celebrated and topics common to all the faiths and to their own lives such as special places are discussed. Religious education supports pupils' appreciation of their own and others' cultural traditions well and thus encourages their respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. Pupils are encouraged to think of the importance of religion in the everyday lives of people. By considering how people in

the past behaved, they learn about how individual choices affect them and their families. They learn to empathise with those who are affected by events such as famine and third world poverty.

74. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The temporary headteacher is acting as caretaker until the new headteacher takes up her post in September. The curriculum is focused on a philosophical approach, the taking on board of important messages from the core faiths and how a faith impacts on life in a practical way. The co-ordinator has opportunities to examine teachers' lesson plans and evaluations, but is aware that when a new co-ordinator is appointed more rigour is needed to raise standards across the school. The scheme of work has been revised in line with the locally agreed syllabus and resources are being matched to the cross-curricular topics for each year group. At present the assessment system is concerned with coverage of the curriculum rather than pupils' individual achievements.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

*Art and design and music were sampled. Design and technology and physical education were not inspected.*

75. Good work was seen in **art and design**. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 have studied the work of Monet. They have used computer paint programs to create colourful pictures of the bridge in his garden at Giverny. Good links are made with geography as pupils draw pictures of Barnaby Bear's journeys to different destinations in this country and abroad. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 studied the work of Henri Rousseau and practised colour mixing to achieve a good range of suitable colours to paint a jungle scene in a similar style. They used their sketchbooks well for their studies of the shapes of leaves before preparing their compositions. The finished paintings showed great attention to detail and the quality of the work was high. They have also made good studies of techniques such as pointillism when studying the work of Georges Seurat and Paul Signac. They are developing a good knowledge of the works of other artists and craftspeople, as well as experience of using a wide range of media. Pupils have used printing techniques well to create good portraits, for example. Digital photographs are used well to record pupils' work.
76. Discussions with staff and pupils, teaching programmes, lesson plans and assemblies show that provision for **music** enriches the curriculum across the school. Pupils have regular music lessons. All pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught by the co-ordinator and pupils in Years 3 to 6 have lessons from their class teacher. Pupils also have the opportunity to learn the recorder from a parent or the co-ordinator depending upon their age, and parents can pay for lessons on the violin or guitar from the county music service. Pupils sing regularly in assemblies and in concerts for parents. When pupils sing together in assemblies they show they can follow a tune and hold a rhythm well, the result being tuneful and a pleasure to listen to. Pupils rarely record their compositions individually, rather the teacher scribes for the class or an individual records for their group so there is little in pupils' books to show their achievement. Music is used well to provide opportunities to establish a mood or enable pupils to record the feelings that pieces of music arouse.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

*This area of the curriculum was sampled.*



77. The school has a good programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship and the governing body ensures that the school meets statutory requirements in respect of its provision for sex and relationships education and drugs education. The school places a high emphasis on pupils' personal development. Pupils are friendly and polite and the results of this provision are seen throughout the school, where pupils work and play together in harmony. There is a good range of opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of citizenship, such as being a class monitor, a playground 'buddy', and through the support of visitors such as the school nurse, the police and fire brigade. A visit from the '*Life Education Bus*' also adds positively to the planned curriculum. This is a travelling classroom that visits the school regularly as part of the school's health education programme. Pupils learn about healthy eating in science when they study the different functions of carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals and proteins and design healthy, balanced meals. Even the youngest children in the reception class have the opportunity to take a full part in discussions and share their feelings and opinions, and an equal opportunity to raise issues and make suggestions.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*